

MINUTES

Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA)

held on

**Thursday, May 14, 2026
at 12:30 pm**

At the following location:

**CCLB Headquarters
Conference Room
340 Nieto Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90814**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Chair Duggan called the meeting to order at approximately 12:40 pm

2. Roll Call

Voting Members Present

Kristina Duggan, Councilmember/Long Beach, Chair
Joe Kalmick, City of Seal Beach, Vice Chair
Sally Gee, State Coastal Conservancy
Roberto Uranga, Councilmember/City of Long Beach

Staff Present

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General
Neysa Frechette, Senior Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence
Christian Garcia, Restoration Programs Manager/Tidal Influence
Sebastian De Leon, Restoration Facilities Manager/Tidal Influence
Megan Wolff, Associate Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence
Chad Oberly, Staff Services Manager I
Amanda Chan, Staff Services Analyst I
Maria Medrano, Secretary

3. Public Comment

Chair Duggan asked Vice Chair Kalmick to address comment regarding eucalyptus trees in Gum Grove Park. Kalmick stated Gum Grove is the responsibility of the City of Seal Beach. The city has maintained a positive working relationship with the Orange County Fire Authority, which conducts wildland fire drills and removes some

underbrush as part of fire prevention efforts. The city's Public Works department also clears dry brush when possible. While eucalyptus trees are not native to California, they are considered part of Gum Grove and Seal Beach's landscape. Attempting to remove the eucalyptus trees would be impractical and difficult.

4. Chair's Report

No Chair report.

5. Approval of Minutes

Board Member Gee, stated there were two misspelled names in the January 22, 2026 minutes. Elizabeth Lambe and Eric Zahn.

Board member Kalmick moved to approve. Board member Gee seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 4; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.

Regular Calendar

6. Status Report on Work Plan Implementation

a. Land Management Update

Sebastian De Leon stated the land management report would be provided for the months of January through March. The first quarter was largely uneventful, which was attributed to effective site security practices.

Staff conducted regular full perimeter patrols particularly at sensitive locations such as the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands (SLCW). During the February patrol through Gum Grove Park and Heron Pointe, staff discovered a vandalized sign and hole in a fence. Because staff had repair equipment available, they fixed both issues immediately during the patrol. Prompt repairs and monthly patrols have helped eliminate unauthorized use of the property. These security efforts are especially important at sites with ongoing construction and sensitive nesting-season habitat.

De Leon stated staff have supported the Stewardship Program while increasing restoration efforts at the SLCW. Work completed included clearing and grubbing vegetation to prepare the site for installation of a tuff shed. Shed will be used to store equipment for the LCWA Stewardship Program. These activities are being carried out in addition to ongoing site security maintenance.

The Bryant Lease West property remains a concern because of its proximity to the San Gabriel River, which provides easy access for unauthorized visitors. Staff have been conducting regular patrols and repairing damaged fences. They also coordinated with LA County Public Works to keep gates locked at the 2nd Street and PCH San Gabriel River levees to restrict access. The locked gates help

reduce unauthorized entry, but staff note that this is not a permanent solution and requires ongoing vigilance. Continued enforcement is intended to discourage repeat trespassing over time. On a positive note, the Zedler Marsh, State Lands Parcel, and Steamshovel Slough properties are currently secure and being maintained effectively, with very few issues reported.

Chair Duggan asked who is responsible for keeping the gates locked at the Bryant Lease West property near 2nd Street after receiving an inquiry from the Island Village HOA. De Leon reported that he had been communicating with members of the Island Village community as well and stated that the responsibility lies with LADWP because it maintains a portion of the property.

Lenny Arkinstall indicated that the power plant has an easement through the section just before the LCWA property. LADWP, the police department, and his staff patrol the area. The issue is ongoing because their authority is limited to a small portion of the property, and they are unable to work in the affected area.

b. Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewardship Program Coordinator Update

Megan Wolff gave an update on the Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewardship Program (LCWSP), highlighting recent stewardship activities and community engagement efforts focused on wetland restoration and education.

Wolff stated from January through April, the Stewardship Program engaged 202 volunteers in habitat restoration activities. Volunteers contributed 526.5 hours, representing approximately \$18,316.94 in in-kind services. Accomplishments during this period included propagating 1,772 plants, removing 1,850 pounds of weeds, and planting 60 salt marsh plants. The Conservation Corps of Long Beach provided additional support on three occasions, assisting with stewardship and ecological monitoring activities.

Volunteer stewardship activities over a four-month period, included 28 volunteers in February who removed ice plant and annual weeds. In April, 29 volunteers worked at the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands, removing jade plant, mustard, radish, and tocalote. Overall, 84 volunteers participated during the four months and contributed a total of 168 hours of service.

Between January and April, several special volunteer events were held, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, which attracted many youth and family participants. At Zedler Marsh, 25 volunteers removed invasive plants including clover, black mustard, and prickly lettuce. On April 17, volunteers from the Aquarium of the Pacific assisted with nursery work. 19 volunteers propagated 913 salt marsh plants in support of the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands restoration project.

Wolff stated in April, 35 people participated in the Gum Grove Raptor Ramble tour. The tour was adapted from the previous Raptor Ramble due to ongoing construction at the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration site. The revised route started at the Gum Grove entrance, proceeded to the Native American Heritage Circle at Heron Pointe, and then returned. Participants reported seeing more raptors on the land-based tour, likely because of the eucalyptus trees in Gum Grove.

AES funding with support and sponsorship from the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust, has helped serve 4,525 students. Between January and April of this year, 16 school field trips were hosted, serving approximately 480 students from Long Beach.

Chair Duggan asked what kind of schools participated in this program. Wolff stated that students come from Title 1 underserved schools.

Chair Duggan asked if their volunteer groups were structured so that corporations could come in with 20 volunteers. Wolff stated they would love to have corporate group of volunteers especially in preparation of the large-scale restoration project and the several special events currently underway.

c. Homeless Liaison Update (Oral Report)

Lenny Arkinstall, CEO of Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewards, provided an update on the efforts to reduce homelessness and improve conditions across several of the Los Cerritos properties. Arkinstall stated he continues to patrol the properties with Seal Beach and Long Beach police departments and have had great results with no homeless individuals.

Arkinstall stated ongoing success has been attributed to the long-term relationships he has built with individuals experiencing homelessness. Staff and police department personnel continue outreach efforts and offer services to these individuals.

Concerns were raised about homelessness and conditions on the walking path used by residents traveling between Island Village and Trader Joe's. The path is maintained and cleared regularly. It is cleared four to five times per year with the most recent cleanup being two days ago.

d. El Dorado Audubon Update

Mary Parsell, President of the El Dorado Audubon, stated bird walks continue and are now at Gum Grove Park due to the restoration efforts in the Southern area.

Mallards were observed in the water, from the recent rain, near the Gum Grove entrance by the chain link fence. A pair of red-shouldered hawks were observed as well as a great horned owl nest was reported by park attendees. Lots of warblers are also seen making nests in the tall trees of park.

Chair Duggan stated she appreciated Mary's detailed reports, the number of birds observed of each kind and the pictures all very much appreciated. Mary stated she does that for data collection. Data is entered into the eBird database which shows bird populations.

e. Expenditure Report

Amanda Chan provided the update on the Expenditure Report dated April 15, 2026.

The Authority is approximately 54% through the fiscal year, and revenues and expenses are tracking according to budget projections. Outstanding annual JPA contributions have now been received.

The Authority received a final \$400,000 grant payment from AES. Advance funding was also received with approximately \$6.4 million from the State Coastal Conservancy and approximately \$1.5 million from the Open Protection Council (OPC). Budget revenue and expense lines have been updated accordingly.

Chan stated most of the advance funding is expected to be spent this fiscal year due to the start of construction in the southern area. Security expenses are currently at 20%, and staff expect to receive all consultant invoices by the end of the fiscal year.

The mid-year budget update includes carrying over unused FY2025 funds for land management and website maintenance. The website maintenance budget was not fully used last year because of contractor delays; those services were completed this year, requiring the carryover. The carried-over funds will support rebranding and outreach efforts. Overall, both revenues and expenses remain in line with projections.

f. Status Report for the Southern LCW Restoration Project

Neysa Frechette (Senior Restoration Ecologist at Tidal Influence) and Robert Bersbach (Syrusa Engineering) provided a brief overview of the Southern LCW Restoration. Frechette stated her update would focus on project management and environmental compliance. Bersbach would provide the construction activity updates.

Frechette stated since January, staff have handled community inquiries and maintained regular communication with residents and the Hellman oil operations team. Community concerns have been minimal, and overall feedback has been very positive. A recent public engagement mixer drew more than 60 attendees, exceeding expectations, with no complaints and strong public interest in the project's progress.

Coordination with Hellman has been successful, including traffic rerouting that has reduced conflicts between construction vehicles. Staff hold twice-weekly meetings with the contractor and design team to address project issues and keep construction moving smoothly.

Additionally, biological, archaeological, tribal, cultural, and paleontological monitors remain on-site as required. Required nesting bird surveys found no impacts to sensitive species, including the Least Bell's Vireo and Belding Savannah Sparrow. Construction timing has helped avoid significant impacts to protected wildlife. The only active nesting area requiring special precautions is a group of birds nesting in palm trees on state lands. Staff report that construction activities have not disturbed the birds and monitoring efforts have been successful.

Robert Bersbach stated rain in February caused significant delays due to muddy site conditions and equipment access issues. Project completion is now anticipated around mid-March.

Installation of all BMPs and ESA fencing has been completed. Secondary channels, Channels 1 and 3, are largely complete, and construction of the main channel, Channel 2, is underway. Northern wetlands grading is substantially complete. Berm construction is nearly finished, with only the berm adjacent to the Hellman property remaining partially complete. State lands clearing and grading have been completed and are moving toward topsoil placement.

Bersbach stated challenges encountered included poor soil conditions in some berm areas required stabilization using 3-6 inch angular rock to create a stable foundation. Areas containing carbon-like material were discovered and tested. The design team is evaluating mitigation options, with capping the material being the leading approach.

Biological monitoring continues during breeding season. No impacts to protected biological resources have been identified from construction activities.

Twice-weekly coordination meetings continue to support issue resolution. Communication between staff and the contractor has been strong and is contributing to project success.

Bersbach stated upcoming work includes complete subgrade verification testing. Extend the San Gabriel River inflow pipe and clean the culvert. Finish the final berm near the Hellman property. Begin large-scale topsoil placement, starting with the state lands area. Proceed with utility relocation work in coordination with SCE.

Chair Duggan asked what is ripping and disking. Heather Altman, AEC, explained that ripping and disking are soil decompaction methods used before planting to improve root penetration.

Chair Duggan asked if the stabilization rock would be removed. Bersbach stated the stabilization rock would remain permanently under the berms which keeps the berm stabilized.

Chair Duggan asked what the schedule is on the undergrounding. Bersbach stated utility pole relocation is expected around September, with undergrounding work anticipated concurrently with box culvert installation around November.

Chair Duggan stated it was great emphasized the importance of their twice-weekly meetings has helped keep the project on schedule.

7. Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to finalize a selected branding concept and implement a standardized graphic design template

Chad Oberly presented the rebranding effort for the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA) that was initiated after the Fall 2025 board meeting due to inconsistent logos, branding, and public-facing materials. The Board authorized the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a graphic designer. The RFP was distributed to more than 400 small businesses and received over 20 qualified responses.

Oberly stated following a review and interview process, the LCWA selected Prime Scale Creative, a Los Angeles-based firm, to develop a professional brand identity. The design team worked with the Authority to understand its audience, activities, and desired image in order to develop logo concepts. Several logo options are now ready for board review. The recommendation is for the board to provide guidance that would allow the Executive Officer to finalize and select a preferred branding template.

Alvaro Wong, CEO and Founder of Prime Scale Creative, outlined eight logo concepts developed for the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA). The designs explored different ways to visually represent LCWA's mission of balancing environmental preservation, wildlife protection, education, and public stewardship within an urban Southern California setting.

Wong stated that many of the designs incorporate the savannah sparrow, a species associated with the wetlands, as a symbol of conservation and stewardship. Several options used wetland elements such as marsh channels, vegetation, water, sunlight, and birds to reflect the organization's environmental focus. The concepts ranged from organic and ecological designs to more institutional and civic-oriented branding styles. The design team emphasized creating a logo that is timeless, recognizable, and scalable for future applications.

Wong presented a broad range of branding directions for LCWA, with eight options reflecting conservation, stewardship, wetlands ecology, and civic identity.

Options 1-3: Focused on sparrow-based imagery, with varying levels of realism, symbolism, and modernity.

Option 4: An emblematic design combining wetlands elements, identified by the design team as a favorite because it balances friendliness, clarity, and long-term relevance.

Options 5-5.2: Inspired in part by the Land Trust logo, featured heron and sparrow variations.

Options 6-7: Moved away from animal imagery and instead used abstract marsh vegetation and wetland geometry as the primary identity.

Option 8: Combined multiple symbols including a sparrow, vegetation, hills, water, and sunlight into a unified logo system intended to convey renewal, optimism, and thriving wetlands.

Board members emphasized that the logo could remain in use for 10–20 years, so they wanted time to carefully evaluate the options before making a final decision.

Wong explained that the logo designs are still fluid and can be revised, including changing elements such as bird species. Once a logo is selected, it will be used to develop related branding materials, including social media graphics, printed materials, and outreach items.

Mark Stanley stated there was no formal deadline for choosing a logo, but Staff would like to adopt one in time for upcoming events this year. Staff recommended narrowing the choices and potentially holding a special meeting for final approval.

Board members discussed preferences for simpler, less busy designs that are recognizable from a distance; a heron-based logo because it better represents local wildlife and wetlands; stronger color schemes and clear visual representation of water, native plants, and habitat.

After reviewing eight logo concepts, the Board narrowed its preferences to Option 1 and Option 5/5.1 and requested additional time to consider the choices before reconvening at a special meeting for a final selection.

8. Closed Session: Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation

- a. Significant Exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9: One case

John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General, stated closed session began at 2:03pm to discuss Item 8 on the agenda. No reportable action was taken. Opening session reconvened at 2:37pm.

9. Oral Communications

- a. Statements, responses, questions or directions to staff pursuant to Section 54954.2(a) of the Government Code

Vice Chair Kalmick praised Heather Altman's presentation at a recent event, noting she clearly explained ongoing activities and answered attendees' questions effectively. Approximately 56 people attended, and the overall feedback was positive. One concern raised involved 20-foot-high observation areas and potential privacy impacts on nearby residents.

The event generated strong public interest, with attendees asking many questions about the project and its future plans.

The Board discussed holding a special meeting to vote on the new brand logo. Staff indicated they need planning time before the upcoming 25th anniversary event scheduled for July 18. The proposed special meeting is May 28 at 1:00pm and is expected to last about 45 minutes.

- b. Future agenda items.

10. Announcement of next meeting date – Thursday, May 28, 2026 @ 1:00pm

11. Adjournment

Chair Duggan adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:45 pm.

MINUTES

Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA)

held on

**Thursday, May 28, 2026
at 1:00 pm**

At the following location:

**CCLB Headquarters
Conference Room
340 Nieto Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90814**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Chair Duggan called the meeting to order at approximately 1:12 pm

2. Roll Call

Voting Members Present

Kristina Duggan, Councilmember/Long Beach, Chair
Joe Kalmick, City of Seal Beach, Vice Chair
Sally Gee, State Coastal Conservancy
Roberto Uranga, Councilmember/City of Long Beach (arrived @ 1:23 pm)

Staff Present

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General
Neysa Frechette, Senior Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence
Christian Garcia, Restoration Programs Manager/Tidal Influence
Sebastian De Leon, Restoration Facilities Manager/Tidal Influence
Megan Wolff, Associate Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence
Chad Oberly, Staff Services Manager I
Maria Medrano, Secretary

3. Public Comment

No public comment were received.

4. Chair's Report

No Chair report.

Regular Calendar

5. Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to finalize a selected branding concept and implement a standardized graphic design template

Chad Oberly stated the Board previously reviewed eight logo designs and narrowed them to two preferred options. Option one featured the sparrow whereas option 5 featured heron. The selected logo is the left-facing egret facing the sun, with adjustments to the grass elements. Both vertical and horizontal versions were reviewed. The Board provided direction to the Executive Officer to finalize the branding template and branding guide, which will be implemented across LCWA.

After selecting the logo, the Board discussed the primary color palette. Members favored green tones, reflecting wetland landscapes and providing stronger visual interest and contrast. The preferred direction is a two-tone green palette. Dark forest green and a lighter green that is not overly mint-colored.

The design should support both standard and inverted versions for different uses, such as signage, merchandise, embroidery, and business cards. Consensus was reached on both the logo and color direction. The graphic designer will move forward using shades of green, avoiding overly mint tones, to develop the final branding package.

Board member Kalmick moved to approve. Board member Gee seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 4; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0

6. Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation

Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9: One case.

John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General, stated closed session began at 1:36pm to discuss Item 6 on the agenda. No reportable action was taken. Opening session reconvened at 2:05pm.

7. Oral Communications

- a. Statements, responses, questions or directions to staff pursuant to Section 54954.2(a) of the Government Code
- b. Future agenda items.

8. Announcement of next meeting date – Thursday, August 13, 2026 @ 12:30 pm

9. Adjournment

Chair Duggan adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:06 pm.